

Community Benefits Report

Fiscal Year 2006

Berkshire Medical Center
Pittsfield, Massachusetts



Berkshire Health Systems

BERKSHIRE MEDICAL CENTER
COMMUNITY BENEFITS REPORT –FISCAL 2006

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I. INTRODUCTION

In fiscal year 2006, Berkshire Medical Center continued to provide activities and programs that focused on the areas for which it had already made a strong commitment, including: threats to youth, access to care, emergency preparedness, environmental health, substance abuse, mental health and the MassHealth initiative. With the benefit of health data and statistics, BMC also continued to increase efforts at educating the community about health risk behaviors and prevention.

This Community Benefits Report contains an overview of the efforts made by Berkshire Medical Center to continue to enhance the health status of the community it serves.

Berkshire Medical Center Overview

Berkshire Medical Center is a nonprofit regional healthcare provider, which is licensed for 302 beds and is fully accredited by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO). As a medical center affiliated with Berkshire Health Systems, Berkshire Medical Center and its Hillcrest Campus serve all residents of Berkshire County, Massachusetts and communities in adjacent eastern New York, northwest Connecticut and southwest Vermont.

Berkshire Medical Center offers a full continuum of medical specialties, including anesthesiology, dentistry, emergency medicine, family medicine, internal medicine, neurology, neurosurgery, obstetrics and gynecology, ophthalmology, orthopedic surgery, otorhinolaryngology (ear, nose and throat), pathology, pediatrics, psychiatry, radiation oncology, radiology, rehabilitation, substance abuse, cardiac rehabilitation, a sleep lab, Magnetic Resonance Imaging units (MRI), among others.

Berkshire Medical Center is supported by a dedicated team of physicians and staff, focused on providing high quality, cost effective, compassionate primary and specialized health care services to the people of Berkshire County and surrounding communities.

BMC's ambulatory and outpatient clinics provide a broad range of services, including a trauma center, dental clinic, the Neighborhood Health Center, Occupational Health, the Crane Center for Day Surgery, renal dialysis unit and psychiatric care programs.

BMC is a major teaching affiliate of the University of Massachusetts Medical School and a clinical site for anesthesia, nursing and allied health fields. The Medical Center sponsors residency programs in medicine, surgery, pathology, dentistry and American Osteopathic programs. As many as 100 medical students from the University of Massachusetts Medical School and other medical schools are experiencing third and fourth year rotations at BMC.

An inestimable benefit to the community is the 24-hour-per-day; 7-day a week cadre of physicians and medical students on duty in the Medical Center delivering services as they learn under supervision. BMC is the only Medical Center in Berkshire County with this distinction. As a teaching facility, BMC has been able to attract the finest in both full-time and voluntary attending staff, committed to the most modern medical knowledge and skills available.

Language translation services are provided by a national telephone service for over 100 languages. BMC has also arranged for sign language interpreters through the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

In addition to BMC's inpatient and outpatient services, the Berkshire Visiting Nurse Association provides professional home health services as an adjunct to BMC's acute care services. Headquartered at the BMC Hillcrest Campus, the BVNA provides comprehensive, multi-disciplinary home care and community service throughout Berkshire County. In cooperation with the City of Pittsfield and the Berkshire United Way, the BVNA provides geriatric health maintenance clinics at numerous locations within the community. The BVNA conducts several community blood pressure and immunization clinics throughout the year and is contracted by numerous boards of health to provide public health services.

Berkshire Medical Center Mission Statement

The mission of Berkshire Health Systems is to improve the health of the people of Berkshire County and surrounding communities, regardless of their ability to pay.

Value Statement

- Excellence*** We believe in providing services of the highest quality and in achieving superior levels of patient satisfaction through the combined efforts of an outstanding team.
- Trust*** We believe in building trusting relationships based on communication, cooperation, and ethical conduct.
- Compassion*** We believe in promoting healing partnerships with patients and their families.
- Respect*** We believe in treating everyone with dignity, kindness, and understanding.
- Stewardship*** We believe that to ensure our future ability to fulfill our mission, we need to maintain a financially viable organization and focus our resources on the most pressing health needs of the community.

II. COMMUNITY BENEFITS MISSION STATEMENT

Berkshire Health Systems is dedicated to the enhancement of the health status of our community by providing and ensuring access to a complete continuum of care, including health education, prevention, screening, diagnostic, therapeutic, rehabilitative and long-term care services.

The BHS Community Benefits and Access Committee coordinates system-wide efforts to satisfy identified needs in the BHS service area. By evaluating and prioritizing countywide healthcare needs, programs and access, the Committee recommends that BHS either develop new or support previously established initiatives in collaboration with other community resources, to satisfy unmet needs and improve the wellness and health status of our community.

BHS, in fulfillment of its charitable purpose, also affirms its commitment to be accountable for the stewardship of the community's healthcare resources and to develop a formal community benefits plan.

The Community Benefits Mission Statement approved by the Board of Trustees annually affirms the Medical Center's commitment to improving the health status of the community. Our strategic plan calls for us to develop a plan to assess and improve the health status of our community and increase our involvement in our community.

III. COMMUNITY BENEFITS PLANNING

Historical Perspective

The Board of Trustees approved Berkshire Medical Center's Mission and Value Statements in 1993, which was updated in 2004 as part of a new strategic plan. This effort set forth from the Medical Center's commitment and strategic plan for the development of a formal community benefit process from which the Community Benefits Mission Statement evolved. The Board mandated a process, which would improve the health status of the community, identify health care needs, provide access to care and demonstrate leadership in the organization of a community-wide effort.

In 1994 a group of individuals met to develop a plan to assess and improve the health status of the community, increase awareness and improve access to services that benefit the community and establish new ways to increase our involvement in the community. We set forth a process to accomplish these goals and simultaneously meet voluntary community benefit guidelines established by the Massachusetts Attorney General.

At the time, a Community Relations Committee, designated as overseer of the Community Benefits Plan, identified a geographic area within the central Berkshire region in which to concentrate efforts. The identified community includes Pittsfield, Dalton, Lanesboro, Richmond and Lenox. The name of the committee was changed to the Community Benefits and Access Committee, and the chair is Joan McFalls. Management responsibility has been delegated to the Senior Vice President for System Planning and Program Development and the Executive Director of the Berkshire Visiting Nurse Association. The Community Benefits and Access Committee meets on a monthly basis throughout the year.

Planning Process: Community Needs Assessment

In Fiscal 2002 the Berkshire Health Systems Board of Trustees approved a community benefits plan that had been under development since Fiscal 2001. This plan is updated annually. As a result, Fiscal 2006 featured the further implementation of programs and initiatives designed to address priorities cited through that process. The process is tied to the BHS mission of improving the health status of the community while ensuring access to care, and is integrated with BHS priorities and initiatives wherever possible. The Community Benefits and Access Committee, working with community groups from Central and Southern Berkshire reviewed and assessed the needs of the community based on data from numerous sources (see below) while also reviewing and assessing existing programs. The prioritization of need addressed areas of high incidence, high risk,

opportunity for results, the Health System's ability to effect change, integration with other BHS initiatives and the ability to form effective partnerships within the community to foster results. The Committee regularly analyzes the best way to prioritize the list of needs identified by the community representatives and developed a method to rank each issue on importance (high frequency, high risk) and ease of implementation. Issues were identified in four major groups, including general population, adult and elderly, youth and special populations. The Committee considered close to 100 health issues, many of which appeared in two or more population groups. The result is a graph (see attachments) assigning importance level in relation to ease of implementation of a program or action to deal with the specific community health issue.

Community Benefits priorities developed through this comprehensive needs assessment include:

- Cardiovascular Disease/Diabetes/Cancer
- Health Risk Factors/Prevention
- Infectious Disease
- Access to Physicians
- Supply of Health Professionals
- Access to Healthcare
- Injury Prevention
- Parenting Skills
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Depression
- Substance Abuse
- Youth Risk Issues
- ADHD
- Dental Health
- Asthma
- Coordination of Care
- Education for Family Providing Care
- Bilingual Issues

The Committee's comprehensive community benefits plan, approved in April of 2002, serves as the guidepost for BMC's community benefits programs for Fiscal 2006 and beyond.

Needs Assessment and Data Sources

The Community Benefits Committee meets regularly to analyze and discuss information regarding key health issues in the target area and to discuss and gather information about services presently provided by Berkshire Medical Center and Berkshire Health Systems. The Committee, through association with a diverse group of individuals and organizations seeks community input in the determination of identifying the healthcare needs of the community. This Committee conducted a comprehensive quantitative review of available health needs data and created large focus groups, composed of community leaders and

other representatives, to openly discuss the needs of the community. Based on these discussions, the Committee developed a list of priorities to be addressed in Fiscal 2004 and beyond.

For FY 2006, data was collected from federal (Healthy People 2010), state (DPH Health Status Indicators), NECON (New England Coalition on Health and Disease Prevention) and local health data sources. In addition, this comprehensive health assessment included such data sources as: DPH Bureau of Family and Community Health's Injuries in Massachusetts report, demographic data supplied by the Executive Office of Communities and Development and the Division of Health Care Finance. We also relied on information provided by the Lodestar Project, which was directed by the Berkshire United Way but with extensive participation by Berkshire Health Systems. Berkshire Medical Center representatives worked with the parent/teacher group at Reid Middle School to determine the need for and advocate provision of a program for children experiencing disciplinary problems. Through the leadership of its Department of Medicine and utilizing BMC's Clinically Applied Research Unit, Berkshire Medical Center also used national health needs data to identify key areas of service for new program development or enhancement of existing programs. BMC also utilized information gathered in the formulation of its strategic planning initiative to identify unmet health needs in the community.

These data sources contributed quantifiable health status indicators for the community focus groups that were established to determine health care priorities. Next, the assessment process looked at information that would be helpful for prevention and health promotion efforts before residents became a statistic.

IV. IDENTIFICATION OF PRIORITY AREAS FOR FISCAL 2006

In its study of healthcare needs, the Community Benefits and Access Committee, in conjunction with community groups from South and Central Berkshires, identified several key areas of concern, to be addressed through the community benefit programs provided by Berkshire Medical Center during Fiscal 2006. These areas are:

- Cardiovascular Health
- Stroke/High Blood Pressure
- Substance Abuse
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Access to Health Care -Medical Professionals
- Access to Care for Uninsured and Underinsured
- Health Care Disparities
- Cancer Outreach
- Injury Prevention
- Community Benefit Chart

Review, Evaluation and Plan Update

Originally reviewed and updated annually, the community benefits planning process was significantly revised in Fiscal 2002, as mentioned previously, and a comprehensive evaluation was conducted, using input from the community, that is designed to map out priorities for the next several years. Each year, available data is reviewed and includes input from the Community Benefits Committee to reaffirm and/or modify as necessary the Community Benefit priorities.

2006 COMMUNITY BENEFIT PROGRAMS

Reid Middle and Conte Community School Partnerships

In Fiscal 2006 Berkshire Medical Center continued its partnership with Reid Middle School in Pittsfield. BMC representatives continued to serve as participants on the Parent School Council. Plans for a Reid Middle School fashion show were developed in 2006, with all benefits earmarked to provide support for various areas of need in the school, such as the Library.

In Fiscal 2006, BMC also continued its partnership with Conte Community School in Pittsfield. Volunteers from BMC worked with children from Conte in many capacities. Activities that BMC initiated with our Conte partner-in-education included:

- Student Recognition - Students who were judged to be “good citizens” at Conte were invited to BMC and a luncheon with Berkshire Health Systems Administrators and other Medical Center representatives. During this luncheon - held several times throughout the year with different groups of students - certificates and gifts were presented to each Conte participant.
- Student/Patient Interaction - Students from Conte made Valentine’s Day, Thanksgiving and other holiday cards for BMC patients and participated in a choral presentation for patients during National Hospital Week for the patients at BMC.
- Families from Conte were recipients in the BMC sponsored Create-A-Dream program
- A Read To Me Program was offered to the students in March
- BMC personnel, including physicians, nurses and technicians met with Conte students and gave presentations on their field of expertise, showing the students some of the equipment used in diagnosing and treating patients and answering questions about their careers in healthcare. The program was videotaped and shown on local cable access television.
- Conte students honored the nurses at BMC on Nurses Day with gifts for each patient unit

Operation Better Start

The Operation Better Start program (OBS) addresses the health care needs of both women and adolescents living in Berkshire County. OBS as a public health and primary care initiative illustrates the philosophy behind our organization's mission statement which is to "enhance the health status of the community by providing services directly and by integrating its services with the continuum of care provided through Berkshire Health Systems." OBS focuses on women, and young people identified to be at a high degree of clinical risk, and offers services to these high risk populations at no out of pocket cost. Operation Better Start directly addresses several of the top ten national health objectives presented in Healthy People 2010: overweight and obesity, physical activity, immunizations and environmental health.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the percentage of young people who are overweight has more than doubled in the past 30 years. One in five children are classified as being overweight, according to the CDC data. The obesity epidemic is poised to overtake smoking as the leading of preventable deaths in the US. In addition, overweight children and adolescents are more likely to become overweight adults, thus increasing the risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes and some types of cancer. There are also significant psychological ramifications associated with being overweight - particularly for children - such as peer relations, scholastic discrimination, low self-esteem and negative body image. According to the CDC, the number of children between the ages of 5 and 19 in Berkshire County considered overweight rose 5% from 1988-1994 data compared to data for 1999-2002, totaling 5,099 children, or up 1,313. The prevalence of overweight among children 6-19 is now at an alarming rate of 18% according to the most current CDC 2003-2004 data.

Using a collaborative approach, Operation Better Start's multidimensional health team, based at the BMC Hillcrest Campus, works cohesively with other available services in the county, including the Berkshire Women Infants and Children's program, the Berkshire Breathing Room (hospital's smoking cessation program), Access for Advocacy (hospital's health insurance program), Berkshire County Head Start, and area pediatric physician practices. The program addresses many areas of perinatal, pediatric and adolescent health as well as providing specialized medical nutrition therapy, self-esteem building, and promotion of physical activity. Nursing case management services provide coordination of care, health education, avoidance of environmental health risks, aiding failure to thrive toddlers, children with eating disorders, breastfeeding problems for new mothers, and client transportation. The program is involved in health data collection and analysis for the Mass Dept. of Public Health and the Berkshire Medical Center's Clinical Applied Research, or CARE Unit. In 2006 a grant partnership with the Center for Ecological Technology (CET) was formed to work on a variety of EPA initiatives addressing perinatal and pediatric health. Through OBS perinatal RNs working in collaboration with CET, WIC, and local OB/GYN offices on the "Healthy Beginnings" grant which focuses on addressing environmental health issues such as lead exposure, mercury intake, smoking, PCBs, pesticides, and safe fish.

An added component is a cooperative agreement between Operation Better Start and the Berkshire Nautilus Fitness Center designed to help pre-teens and adolescents build self-esteem and inner strength, as well as to improve physical fitness. The collaboration with Berkshire Nautilus provides children and teens, who are participants in the Operation Better Start Program, with a supervised exercise program in a low-key, nonjudgmental atmosphere. In addition, Operation Better Start continued its joint venture with the Pittsfield Family YMCA providing a fitness program for youth ages 6-10. Another focus of the program's approach to combating adolescent obesity is educating families, who have often passed along unhealthy habits to their children. As a result, family involvement and the education and support of the extended family are key components to the program's success. Both the Nautilus and YMCA fitness programs have a new design which now gives parents the opportunity to exercise with their child in a structured environment. In 2006 OBS was selected as one of thirteen intensive community sites in the country to initiate the National Institutes of Health "We Can!" program (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity and Nutrition). Through this unique opportunity OBS was able to bring this initiative to the Berkshire County community. In late 2006 OBS received an "Award of Excellence" from the National Institutes of Health 'in recognition of its contribution to the health and well-being of the nation's youth and families through diligent service to the national We Can! program.

Targeting obesity among children in the public school system, Operation Better Start conducted a comprehensive assessment identifying the level of obesity in the Pittsfield schools during fiscal year 2004. In 2006 the frame work was established with the school system to reassess the school system in 2007. These assessments utilized data provided by the school department in regard to height and weight of students, and was then applied to the national standards for Body Mass Index. As expected in 2004 the data showed a significant number of Pittsfield school students to be classified as overweight. In Fiscal 2005, Operation Better Start worked with school administration, principals, teachers, school nurses and school nutrition officers on the development of a strategic plan to address this issue. Operation Better Start, with support from a General Mills Champions Youth Nutrition and Fitness grant, provided in school nutrition and fitness programs to the eight elementary schools in Pittsfield. Operation Better Start staff was present in the schools each week enhancing the health curriculum and providing hands on experience in the classroom. OBS also had the opportunity in 2006 to participate in the planning, development and initiation of the Pittsfield school district Wellness Policy. In 2005 Operation Better Start helped the Pittsfield middle schools to secure 3 years of funding through BC/BS of Mass. Healthy Choices grants. In 2006 OBS was able to assist Lenox Memorial Middle & High School to secure the Healthy Choices grant for three years of funding. These grants have allowed the middle schools to establish after school nutrition and fitness programs. Operation Better Start provides staff expertise and educational materials to these programs.

Operation Better Start staff includes a Physician Advisor, a Nurse Practitioner, perinatal and pediatric RN clinical managers, Registered and Licensed Dietitians, and Certified Personal Trainers. Operation Better Start utilizes an extensive referral network for its clients, including over 18 pediatric physicians and nurse practitioners, Lee Family Practice,

Family Practice Associates, 7 +OB/GYN physicians and 2 certified nurse midwives, a family practice group based at Hillcrest, Advocacy for Access, Head Start, the Berkshire Visiting Nurse Association, The Family Center, BMC Tobacco Treatment Program and numerous other healthcare providers. OBS is also working with the local colleges and universities to provide nursing students and dietetic students the opportunity to intern and learn in a “real world” environment.

In 2006, Operation Better Start’s pediatric and adolescent program reported having over 198 new families enter the program, and provided over 2164 contact with our Medical Nutrition Therapy team made up of Registered and Licensed Dietitians and Nurse Practitioner. The RN Case Managers reviewed over 1082 contacts for services and referral. Operation Better Start’s perinatal program assessed 283 new perinatal women and provided 1001 perinatal contacts. These enhanced clinical services and case management were provided in the Women, Infants and Children’s program. The program assessed 481 new families for health insurance and smoking cessation services. Over 621 additional referrals were made to community agencies in 2006. Over 600 children have participated in OBS supported exercise programs, designed to fight obesity in youth, in 2006.

Advocacy for Access

The Health Care Access Act expanded health care benefits for low and moderate-income families and individuals that live in Massachusetts. In partnership with the local Community Health Network Area (CHNA) and The Department of Public Health, Berkshire Medical Center continues to support and utilize a specialized outreach program called Advocacy for Access.

The goal of Advocacy for Access program is to eliminate or reduce the number of people who are uninsured or underinsured and to create awareness of the different programs that help to pay for health services. Our intention is to eliminate or reduce the numbers of people who experience this barrier to health care.

The objective of Advocacy for access is to facilitate the enrollment of eligible applicants into a variety of available public programs including the newly formed Commonwealth Care program designed to provide health coverage for all Massachusetts residents, MassHealth, the Children’s Medical Security Program and Free Care and follow-up with clients on how to navigate the health care system post enrollment. This program has become even more acutely needed as a result of the growth of uncompensated care provided by Berkshire Medical Center to the community.

The partnership between Advocacy for Access and the Department of Public Health's local CHNA serves as a conduit for communication with 40-50 community agency representatives to identify needs and recommend appropriate approaches to care at BMC. Through this partnership, Advocacy for Access educates the community and MassHealth enrollees on the availability of public programs, including Project HEROA, WIC, Men’s Health Partnership and others.

Advocacy for Access staff serve as a central resource for community health-access questions and referrals. This team of experienced professionals works closely with MassHealth and other specialized outreach programs to coordinate services including:

- Preparation of educational flyers and handouts to distribute throughout Central and Southern Berkshire County.
- Identifying and tracking eligible clients throughout the enrollment process.
- Work with local businesses to reach employees who are not presently covered by company health plans and who may be eligible for the MassHealth Family Assistance or the Insurance Partnership Program.
- Work with the House of Corrections and the Community Correction Program with soon-to-be-released inmates to educate and help enroll them in MassHealth
- Meeting with Behavioral Health Staff and clients on the Jones II, III, (Psychiatric units) and McGee Substance Abuse Unit to address healthcare access issues thereby reducing dependence on the emergency department as a primary source of health care and helping clients continue treatment/follow-up in the most appropriate setting.

Advocacy for Access Statistical Data - for the period Oct. 2005 –Sept. 2006

MassHealth Insurance Enrollment Approved (BMC) **4,612** persons

Community Residents Served through Program **8,000** (approx.)
(residents referred to free care, Project HEROA, Healthy Start, WIC, Accent on Health , misc. prescription programs or non-group insurance).

Advocacy for Access received approximately **1000** telephone inquiries per month on healthcare access issues, and mailed over **2,000** informational packets. Additionally, close **to 2,000** resource guides, flyers and other informational mailings were distributed in the community through professional and medical offices, physician practices, homeless shelters, the Christian Center and other community-based organizations.

Physician and Clinical Professional Recruitment

Berkshire County, as is the case in many areas of the country, and particularly in Massachusetts, continues to be faced with a severe shortage of primary care physicians and specialists and an equally distressing trend in nursing and specialty areas, including radiologic technology. In Berkshire County over the past several years many physicians have altered their practices, in effect reducing their coverage. This in combination with inadequate reimbursement rates and escalating costs for malpractice insurance coverage has led to a critical shortage of physicians. On the nursing front, there are large numbers of

Registered and Licensed Practical Nurses entering retirement at the same time as nursing schools are experiencing a lower number of candidates. Nationally, there is also a shortage of available radiologic technologists. As a result, Berkshire County has seen a significant reduction in both its physician base and nurses over the past several years, and an increasing need for additional radiologic technologists. In developing its priority areas, the local CHNA cited an increased effort on physician recruitment as a necessity for the Health Systems.

The end result of the shortage of physicians is that patients wait longer for appointments with their primary care and specialty practitioners or to obtain care more quickly utilize the Emergency Department at BMC, even for non-emergent needs. This in turn places an added burden on the emergency care providers. At the same time, hospitals across the country are struggling to both recruit and retain their nursing corps, the backbone of patient care in the hospital setting.

In today's healthcare climate, physician practices, hampered by low reimbursement rates and a tightening field of physicians, particularly in specialty areas, have been unable to dedicate ever-shrinking resources to recruitment of new physicians. As a result, Berkshire Medical Center has taken on the non-traditional role of being the safety net for access to critical services, helping to recruit physicians for private practices, in order to aid physician practices to meet the needs of the community. In Fiscal 2006, BMC continued its physician recruitment program and professional training programs for clinicians, both proving successful in bringing several new physicians to the area while increasing the number of Registered Nurses and radiologic technologists.

Working collaboratively with existing physician practices, BMC provided both direct financial support in excess of \$300,000 to more effectively recruit new physicians. This included providing private practices with communication and advertising support and office start-up assistance. BMC also recruited several new physicians to practice in its own Berkshire Faculty Services, a physician practice based at the Medical Center. In addition, the Medical Education program at Berkshire Medical Center, which is a teaching affiliate of the University of Massachusetts Medical School, continues to utilize its resources to provide students with a wide range of training and residency programs. Many residents, after completing their residency requirements at BMC have chosen to practice locally.

In large part due to this comprehensive physician recruitment effort, close to 20 new physicians joined the Berkshire Medical Center medical staff in Fiscal 2006. This included physicians practicing in: primary care, emergency medicine, family medicine, occupational health, cardiology, psychiatry, neurology, general and orthopaedic surgery, dental health and oral surgery, anesthesiology, radiology and rheumatology.

Clinical Shortage Recruitment and Training

Berkshire Medical Center, through its parent Berkshire Health Systems and in collaboration with Berkshire Community College in Fiscal 2006 continued its program providing free tuition and fee coverage for BHS employees participating in a qualified nursing training program. This unique venture allowed 100 BHS employees to begin

training as nurses, and each are committed to working at a BHS affiliate upon graduation. Through this collaborative effort, the college was able to expand the number of available slots for those wishing to pursue a degree in nursing. Participants included employees who did not come from the nursing profession originally but wished to change career paths and achieve an RN degree, and others were Licensed Practical Nurses wishing to further their training through pursuing an RN degree. A total of 37 employees have already graduated from this program. In addition, BHS provided two 16 hour adjunct faculty to BCC in an effort to increase enrollment in their nursing program.

In 2006, Berkshire Medical Center, in collaboration with Springfield Technical Community College, continued to provide free tuition and fees to eligible candidates enrolled in a radiologic technologist training program at the college. These participants are Berkshire Health Systems employees who desired to begin a career as a radiologic technologist and agreed to work at a BHS facility upon graduation from the program. Eight employees have completed and graduated from this program and are currently employed at BMC. Twenty are currently enrolled.

A new critical shortage program was initiated in 2004 in an effort to address Nursing Faculty shortage, and continued in 2006. Two nurses were enrolled in Master of Science in Nursing programs and all tuition and all fees are being paid by BHS. One of these nurses has completed her studies and continues to be employed as adjunct faculty at BCC. The other will complete her studies in 2007 obtaining a dual degree, an MSN and MBA. This is a cooperative community program.

In addition, in 2006 Berkshire Medical Center provided direct support to Berkshire Community College to enhance its nursing training programs. Nurses from BMC worked as faculty at BCC in both its Licensed Practical Nursing and Associates Degree in Nursing programs.

Overall, Berkshire Health Systems invested over \$400,000 in training programs for nursing and technologists during fiscal 2006.

Investing in Community Initiatives

Berkshire Health Systems in Fiscal 2006 provided significant support to community education programs, including a \$100,000 donation to the Berkshire Wireless Learning Initiative (BWLI). BWLI is a program funded by community donations and state grant dollars that provides laptop computers to middle school students in Pittsfield and North Adams. By the end of Fiscal 2006, 2,300 computers had been placed in the middle schools, as the result of financial support provided by BHS and many other businesses in the community. The BHS donation pushed private sector support over the \$1 million mark. This milestone helped to put the BWLI program two years ahead of its original schedule to provide laptops for all middle school students in the two cities.

Women's Imaging Center Program

Initially developed through consultation with numerous women affected by breast cancer and other women's health issues, Berkshire Medical Center in Fiscal 2006 continued its comprehensive program focusing on women's health. The Women's Imaging Center program is designed to promote a feeling of calm and peacefulness, featuring coordinated services, a private waiting room, educational resources and a separate consultation room. The program begins with outreach to promote public awareness of the importance of early detection of breast cancer and continues across the continuum of care from the time of diagnosis to treatment, to post-treatment support and if needed, end of life care. In keeping with our commitment to providing state-of-the-art diagnostic and treatment options to the people of the Berkshires, BMC's Women's Imaging Center is equipped with state-of-the-art diagnostic tools, including breast MRI, ultrasound, mammography, stereotactic imaging and bone densitometry. A Registered Nurse and breast cancer survivor directs the program. This care coordinator provides direct support and education for those newly diagnosed with breast cancer. The medical director of the program is a radiologist and breast-imaging specialist trained at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. In Fiscal 2006, with the aid of a major grant from the Massachusetts affiliate of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, Inc., the Women's Imaging Center sponsored public educational programs on breast and other cancers, nutrition for cancer patients, and forums on osteoporosis and other women's health issues, and successfully scheduled a higher number of women for mammography screening than in previous years. Programs included awareness efforts on breast and other cancers held in public centers, such as housing complexes and churches, conducting mammogram education programs in conjunction with public flu vaccine clinics and sponsoring local support groups for both men and women with cancer. In addition, the program participated in health fairs at business sites throughout the county and scheduled interested women for mammograms.

Emergency Preparedness

During Fiscal 2006, Berkshire Medical Center continued enhancement of its comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan, designed to provide a strategic response to emergent situations ranging from mass casualty incidents to hospital evacuation and many other possible scenarios. While implemented in the wake of the September 11, 2001 tragedies, the Emergency Operations Plan at BMC was under active development several months prior to those horrific events. However, their impact and the changing nature of emergency planning necessitated the inclusion of preparatory measures for incidents that could include a terrorist threat or the use of weapons of mass destruction. Developed with the assistance of an emergency preparedness expert from Connecticut, the BMC plan, implemented in 2002, saw continual evolvement of many components in Fiscal 2006. A critical aspect of this plan is the scheduling of both table-top and active community-wide drills to test the capabilities and response of local emergency personnel. These drills are coordinated by BMC in collaboration with city and town fire and police departments, the local emergency management agency and ambulance services in the region. In 2006, a large-scale drill was conducted on the grounds of the Pittsfield Municipal Airport, in conjunction with airport officials, the Pittsfield Police and Fire

Departments, Massachusetts State Police, the Berkshire County Hazardous Materials Team and local ambulance service providers from Central Berkshire.

The Emergency Operations Plan at BMC is designed to be evolutionary, capable of changing to meet the individual scenario or situations. The base of operations is an Emergency Operations Center, which is established at the hospital and staffed within 15-minutes of the onset of an emergent situation. As part of the ongoing concentration on preparation for emergency situations, BMC has a special decontamination tent to be used in the event of a hazardous materials or biological incident. Drills were conducted in 2006, in collaboration with local emergency personnel to test how rapidly the decontamination tent can be deployed and made ready for use in treating potential victims of hazardous materials exposure or other contaminations.

Accent on Health

The Accent on Health program was developed in 1997 to address barriers to care identified in a variety of community-wide needs assessments. The specific focus was on providing easy access to health education, health screenings and referral information. The presence of registered nurses in the community, the regular publication of community health activities and programs in area newspapers and the establishment of a telephone health-line were initiatives that were enthusiastically received by the community.

In consultation with the Medical Center's Community Benefit Advisory Board and other community groups, the Accent on Health program was expanded significantly to include additional services with a special emphasis on prevention and health risk behaviors. During Fiscal 2006, the Accent on Health program continued to serve as the infrastructure through which Berkshire Medical Center addressed many key components of our Community Benefit priorities.

The Accent on Health initiative became Berkshire Medical Center's primary community outreach effort in 1998, and continued in that role through Fiscal 2005. In 2006, community outreach was enhanced with the Health Communities Access Program, a federally funded grant program to provide health insurance enrollment, health screening, and facilitated referral for Primary Care, dental and mental health services.

Community collaboration is a crucial part of our outreach initiative. Examples of collaboration include the regular visits of our health professionals to organizations serving a diverse population, including the under-served and minority populations. These collaborative organizations include:

- Christian Center
- Salvation Army
- Many local businesses
- Schools
- Senior Centers
- Faith-based and social organizations

- Libraries
- Community Corrections
- Barton's Crossing
- Cultural Arts Community
- Major Shopping Centers
- Various human service agencies

These consistent and regularly scheduled services have provided a basis for building strong relationships with BMC professionals which help to promote personal responsibility for health, resulting in improved individual health status.

Our multi-focal approach was designed to meet the needs identified by our community and includes:

- Over 30,000 health-related contacts made in the community
- In Fiscal 2005, Accent on Health planned a major expansion of its Worksite Wellness program, which was implemented in 2006 through the development of a Wellness at Work Initiative for Berkshire Health Systems, which in addition to being the parent corporation for Berkshire Medical Center is also the largest employer in Berkshire County, with nearly 3,300 employees
- The Worksite Wellness program also works with several area businesses, large and small, to bring health and wellness initiatives and screenings directly to employees of the businesses. With the skyrocketing cost of health insurance, area businesses have found the program as a conduit to provide employees with awareness of risk factors associated with cardiovascular disease, diabetes and stroke, and through on-site screenings have been able to help workers to begin preventive measures designed to improve their health. More than 1,500 employees have participated in comprehensive health risk assessment with counseling at more than 12 different worksites throughout Berkshire County.
- Professional daytime and evening lectures presented on numerous subjects, designed to address specific Berkshire County health issues. These offerings are free, available at various community locations and often are in response to requests from other community agencies.
- Flyers offering current, convenient information about injury prevention, health screenings, educational offerings and support groups and made available to the public at various human service agency headquarters and at screening and health risk assessment locations.

A telephone health line provided a centralized place for people in the community to call for health information or to receive appropriate community referrals.

Cardiovascular Disease

In Fiscal 2006, Berkshire Medical Center continued to direct significant community outreach resources to the prevention of cardiovascular disease and education for the public on the risk factors associated with heart disease. In 2006, BMC also continued stroke and

diabetes prevention and awareness as part of its program focusing on cardiovascular disease, with studies showing links between the three. Additionally, BMC's approach to cardiovascular disease prevention is one of the major components of our Healthier Berkshires Initiative, referenced later in this report.

According to the American Heart Association, cardiovascular diseases kill close to 950,000 Americans each year. BMC, through its community outreach programs and its Berkshire Visiting Nurse Association performed over 500 cardiac-related screenings in the community in Fiscal 2006.

In addition, Berkshire Medical Center continued as a leading participant nationally in the American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines initiative, designed to close the treatment gap in secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease. Under this program, BMC documented improvement in meeting or exceeding benchmarks in five core indicators: smoking cessation, lipid lowering drugs, aspirin, Beta-blockers and ACE inhibitors. As a result of the program – led at BMC by its Department of Medicine in collaboration with local physicians and a multidisciplinary hospital staff – the American Heart Association for the fifth year in a row recognized the Medical Center with its highest honor, the Performance Achievement Award. In order to be considered for a Performance Achievement Award, a hospital's data must indicate achievement of compliance of the five performance criteria in at least 85% of patients. Berkshire Medical Center has documented compliance of the criteria in 100% of patients in all five areas. In fiscal 2006, the Heart Association's Performance Achievement Award was bestowed on only two medical centers in the United States – Berkshire Medical Center and UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles.

According to American Heart Association statistics, within six years after a recognized heart attack, 18 percent of men and 35 percent of women will have another heart attack, and about 22 percent of men and 46 percent of women will be disabled with heart failure. Research supports the theory that these numbers could improve if a program like Get With The Guidelines is implemented.

Diabetes Education

Developed in 2002, the Diabetes Self Management Education Program is designed to optimize clinical and economic outcomes for patients with diabetes, and works hand-in-hand with BMC's efforts to address overall cardiovascular issues, with the focus on heart disease, stroke and diabetes. The diabetes program provides needed education services to patients and families with a team approach, and based on national standards. The program serves as a core building block for a comprehensive outpatient service with expanded diabetes services and is recognized by the American Diabetes Association. The BMC program, led by Candace Lusa, RN provides diabetes education services to patients throughout the Berkshires, where it's estimated that between 10% of the population have the disease. Additionally, another thirteen to fifteen thousand have impaired glucose of pre-diabetes.

The program had been aimed at adults age 18 or older with type 1 or 2 diabetes but now has expanded to include education for gestational diabetes, diabetes with pregnancy, and insulin pump therapy. The BMC program utilizes the services of Certified Diabetes Educators. In 2004, the program was expanded to include sister hospital Fairview Hospital in Great Barrington, and that program continued in 2006. In Fiscal 2006, the Diabetes Education program at BMC worked with 499 diabetic patients in both individual and group counseling efforts.

Stroke Risk Screening

Stroke is reported to be the third leading cause of death in the United States, as well as a leading cause of serious, long-term disability. Close to 600,000 new strokes are documented annually, and it has been estimated that carotid artery disease may be responsible for 20 to 30% of them. For people over the age of 55, the incidence of stroke more than doubles in each successive decade. About 29% of people who have an initial stroke die within one year, and this percentage is even higher for those 65 and older. As the average age of residents within Berkshire County continues to rise, Berkshire Medical Center in Fiscal 2006 through its Accent on Health and Wellness at Work initiative continued its screening program to identify individuals at risk for stroke.

Utilizing a comprehensive approach to help community residents identify their risks for stroke, Accent on Health and the Berkshire Visiting Nurse Association provided public screening programs targeting the major risk factors. Stroke risk screenings were conducted, stroke education programs were held, with both community and corporate cholesterol screenings and over 4,500 people participated in hypertension clinics held throughout the community. In conjunction with BMC's comprehensive stroke treatment and recovery program, which includes a dedicated stroke unit at the Medical Center, professionals from the Accent on Health program regularly promoted screening programs and discussed stroke risks and preventative measures through appearances on local radio and television programs.

In fiscal 2006, the BMC Stroke Program was again honored by the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association with its Get with the Guidelines honor for stroke care, the first and only program to be so recognized in the United States for two years running. Berkshire Medical Center's stroke program was also the first in western Massachusetts to be designated a certified stroke program by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health during a comprehensive survey process in 2005.

Healthier Berkshires Initiative

In 2006, a BMC initiative designed to bring considerable resources to bear on critical health issues affecting the community continued through what is called Healthier Berkshires. The program continued working on promoting themes and priorities reviewed in daylong conferences held in 2002 and 2004 featuring local healthcare leaders and nationally recognized experts. These priorities include: Cardiovascular Disease, Diabetes, Behavioral Health, Access to Care, Childhood Metabolic Syndrome and Workplace

Wellness. The goal of Healthier Berkshires is to energize and focus community efforts to measurably improve the physical and behavioral well-being of area residents. This includes a concentration on preventing and helping people to do things like quit smoking, exercise more and lose weight, changes that can have a profound impact on the community. Healthier Berkshires is also directly tied to the Medical Center's efforts in reducing cardiovascular disease (as described earlier), including strict adherence to the American Heart Association's Get With the Guidelines program. Statistics show that the mortality rate in the Berkshires for BMC patients with cardiovascular disease has been impacted by Get With the Guidelines effort. In 1994, 629 Berkshire County residents died of cardiovascular disease. In 1999, the year before BMC initiated its Get With the Guidelines program, 623 deaths were registered. In 2004, the number was over 26% lower, and figures for 2005 and beyond are expected to show a continuing decline in mortality. In addition, mortality rate figures for coronary artery disease were over 30% lower, over 44% lower for acute myocardial infarction, 34% lower for heart failure and nearly 35% lower for stroke. This means that compared to historic trends, fewer Berkshire residents died prematurely from cardiovascular disease.

Injury Prevention

With leadership from its Trauma program, BMC identified key areas where preventive programs can help to reduce the number of injuries caused by participation in risk-associated activities and falls. An injury prevention committee, meeting regularly, targeted several areas in fiscal 2006, including general injury prevention, bicycle injury prevention and falls, a key injury category for senior citizens. In addition, during 2006, the BMC Trauma program collaborated with Pittsfield Police on a bicycle rodeo focusing on head injury prevention and with the Emergency Operations staff at BMC on a bike safety program for employees. Trauma also worked closely with neurologist Ellen Deibert, MD on a program concentrating on concussion, collaborating with local health care professionals and other agencies on the dangers of concussion and second impact syndrome (see later notation on Brain Injury program). Past efforts included promotion of the use of seat belts in automobiles in conjunction with the state's "Click it or Ticket" program and in collaboration with local police departments; posting flyers at local ski resorts, in schools, ski equipment stores and community publications, helmet use for skiers and snowboarders with a similar approach in regard to bicycle safety and the use of bike helmets; creation and distribution of a button in the schools, at ski resorts and ski shops and at bicycle shops promoting the use of helmets for safety; and working with local senior centers and organizations serving the senior population on education initiatives designed to help prevent falls. BMC was formally certified as a Level II Trauma Center in 2005 by the American College of Surgeons, after a rigorous and intensive review of the Trauma program, which included the focus on preventive education in the community.

Dental Education and Sealant Program

Working collaboratively with the Enhanced School Health Consultation Program, BMC continues its dental education and sealant program for youth in area schools, piloted in

Fiscal 2003 and continuing in 2006. Targeting the second-grade population throughout Berkshire County, this program is designed to provide free dental evaluations, brief exams and molar sealants for the students who participate. The program is conducted at the individual schools using mobile dental equipment, and utilizing the dental professionals associated with the BMC Dental Residency program. The program works with 16 schools from throughout Berkshire County, and provided preventive dental services and education to 216 students in 2006.

Cancer Care

The Cancer Care Committee provides programs designed to raise awareness and promote education on issues related to cancer, to identify opportunities to improve the spectrum of care and services provided to BMC oncology patients. BMC has been designated a Community Hospital Comprehensive Cancer Program by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer. The Cancer Committee is comprised of representatives from specialties involved in the diagnosis, treatment and support of cancer patients, including but not limited to surgery, medical oncology, radiation oncology, pathology, nutrition, nursing, prevention, early detection, social services, support services, administration and quality. The Committee develops and evaluates annual goals and objectives for clinical, educational and programmatic endeavors related to cancer care. It also promotes prevention and early detection, coordinated multidisciplinary approaches to patient care, develops cancer conferences and monitors performance improvement. The Committee meets at least quarterly.

Walk With Me in the Berkshires

In the spring of 2006, Berkshire Medical Center, working collaboratively with the local Councils on Aging and many other organizations, agencies and local businesses and Berkshire Health Systems' Wellness at Work initiative, sponsored its fourth Walk With Me in the Berkshires program, designed to get local residents walking for better health. BMC distributed free pedometers, which measure the number of steps a person takes and is worn like a pager, to the first 1,000 people from the general public who registered for the program, and an additional 600 employees of BHS through Wellness at Work. In April and May, the participants walked, ran, used a treadmill or any other method of exercise that required taking a step, using his or her pedometer to record their steps each week. They then reported the number of steps and the program published a weekly record on the BHS web site and team statistics in the Berkshire Eagle newspaper, showing the increase in steps by participants each week. Plans are to continue Walk With Me in 2007.

Environmental Health – Sprout Initiative

In Fiscal 2006, Berkshire Medical Center in collaboration with local pediatric physician practices and the Center for Ecological Technology continued an effort focusing on environmental health and aimed at area youth. Called SPROUT, the non-profit initiative is designed to educate families and the public at large regarding the unique vulnerabilities of children to environmental exposures. Sprout envisions this education as a critical first

step towards its ultimate goal of empowering the public to initiate both individual and community wide changes that are necessary to better protect children from exposure to toxic materials. Berkshire Medical Center's visiting nurse program, the Berkshire Visiting Nurse Association, in 2006 continued a program called Healthier Beginnings in association with SPROUT. This unique program features a visiting nurse conducting an in-home visit with parents of newborn babies to help them assess potential environmental hazards in the home and providing recommendations on the use of non-toxic cleaning materials and other safety measures to help protect the home environment.

BHS Community Pain Management Project

Effective treatment of pain has long represented a central and continuing challenge for healthcare providers. More recently, a disturbing epidemic of pain medication diversion and misuse, both nationwide and within the Berkshires has compounded this challenge by both creating a public health and safety crisis of its own and by interfering with the availability of care for those who need it. In 2004, Berkshire Health Systems initiated a comprehensive, community-wide effort to address the twin goals of improving chronic pain management services while also combating drug diversion and misuse.

The BHS Community Pain Management Project is a collaborative effort of healthcare providers, substance abuse specialists and members of law enforcement and the court system under the clinical leadership of prominent physicians at BMC and within BHS specializing in pain management, substance abuse, mental health and many other disciplines in medicine. In 2006, the Pain Management Project began implementing the results of its efforts and has been identified as a leading edge program by the Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and national authorities on pain management and drug diversion.

According to the DPH, in 2005 alone Berkshire County pharmacies filled prescriptions for nearly 2.8 million doses of Schedule II opioid medications – pain medications with significant risk of abuse and addiction, including morphine derivatives, oxycodone and percocet. That figure represents more than four times the number of Schedule II doses dispensed in 1996 and does not include any of the estimated 11.2 million doses of Schedule III pain medications, such as Vicodin, also prescribed in the Berkshires in 2005.

Investing more than \$400,000 in the Pain Management Project, Berkshire Health Systems has sponsored the work of a comprehensive team, comprised of both BHS-affiliated and independent practitioners, to develop a diagnostic and treatment “tool-kit” for all local providers, designed to give them the best practice information for assessing and managing patients complaining of chronic pain. This tool kit, which will be regularly updated, offers practitioners state-of-the-art diagnostic information, non-pharmaceutical treatment alternatives to consider and methods of identifying and responding to potential abusers or diverters of pain medication. In addition, the Project seeks to expand the capacity of local substance abuse programs to assure the availability of an effective treatment response for those suffering from addiction to pain medication and other substance abuse problems.

In 2006, this program established a unique collaboration with the Department of Public Health's Prescription Monitoring Program, to provide local providers with regular information about their own prescribing practices, so they can better understand them, compare them to their peers' practices and, when appropriate, make adjustments. The DPH program and its academic partners are also coordinating efforts with the BHS project to develop baseline data and measures for determining success of the program over time. With that work, the Pain Management Project and its regulatory and academic colleagues will create a body of information and set of tools that will be useful for communities throughout the state and across the nation in addressing pain management and prescription drug abuse challenges.

Substance Abuse – Pittsfield Prevention Partnership

In 2006, Berkshire Medical Center, in collaboration with community agencies from throughout the county, including the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition, continued its participation in the Pittsfield Prevention Partnership (PPP), which emanated from a substance abuse leadership forum held in 2005, also partly sponsored by BMC. The Partnership has to date featured:

- Community forums attended by many Pittsfield residents that provided opportunities for parents to learn strategies they can use to keep their kids safe and alcohol and drug free.
- Information to parents that went out through the local schools to help provide support for keeping their children safe and drug free through the prom and graduation season.
- A series of First Thursday Lunches that have helped to educate members of the PPP about coalition development and the principles of prevention. These First Thursday Lunches, which began in 2005 and continued in 2006 evolved to become monthly membership meetings.
- A plan for the PPP that has at its center an assessment of youth risk and protective factors and a commitment to proven methodologies and science based practices.
- Regular Coalition Steering Committee meetings.
- A leadership council consisting of Berkshire United Way, Berkshire Health Systems, the office of Pittsfield Mayor James Ruberto, and the Brien Center (a center focusing on substance abuse and mental health issues that is partnered with Berkshire Medical Center in providing mental health and substance abuse services to the community).
- Sponsorship of the Prevention Needs Assessment Survey, distributed to 8th, 10th and 12th grade students across the Berkshires, helping schools to identify risks and protective factors in our community along with youth risk behaviors. This survey will be a critical guidance tool for future planning for our community.

Health Information Center

In Fiscal 2006, Berkshire Medical Center continued the operation of its Health Information Center. Located in the Medical Center's lobby area, the Health Information Center provides valuable health and wellness information for patients, their families and the community at large. The Health Information Center is a division of the BMC Medical Library in collaboration with the American Cancer Society, and is staffed by trained volunteers. The Center also houses the American Cancer Society's Resource Room, and provides information on Cancer Society programs, support groups, local health events, community resources, prevention and detection information. The Center has two computers available for use by visitors, in order to search for health information online. Computer classes are offered on how to access quality health information on the internet, and access to BMC Medical Library databases is provided. In Fiscal 2006, the Center recorded nearly 17,000 visits.

Healthy Communities Access Program

The Berkshire Health Systems Accent on Health program in 2006 partnered with two other community agencies to help increase access to healthcare for those who are uninsured or under-insured. Accent on Health, Community Health Programs in Great Barrington and the Hilltown Community Health Centers in Worthington and Huntington were awarded a Healthy Communities Access Program (HCAP) grant totaling \$1 million.

The HCAP grant increased access for the uninsured and under-insured to community based healthcare and improved social support. During 2006, the three agencies worked together to enroll those who are eligible into public insurance plans and free care and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of services. Accent on Health and the two other organizations created three mobile outreach teams with the help of the grant funding.

The Accent on Health team served Pittsfield and the central Berkshire communities of Cheshire, Dalton, Hancock, Hinsdale, Lanesboro, Peru, Washington and Windsor. The team from BMC provided health screenings and health risk assessments, offered health education and referred clients to the appropriate community health resources. In addition, the program assisted clients with insurance enrollment and arranged details for medical follow-up care. Screening clinics were provided throughout the communities served by the program.

The total service area of the HCAP grant includes a population of over 100,000. It is estimated that 31,000 of these are uninsured or under-insured and eligible for insurance.

Cooperative Efforts

As mentioned, another essential cooperative effort is our association with the local Community Health Network Area (CHNA). Berkshire Medical Center is an active participant in a monthly forum, which serves as a means for BMC to understand current community health issues and to develop corresponding programs to address these needs. This forum also provides an excellent way of communicating existing health resources and

available health programs, which are provided by Berkshire Medical Center throughout Berkshire County. Approximately 40 agencies, in conjunction with Berkshire Medical Center, are working together to enhance the health status of our community. This partnership helps us to better understand health care access issues and barriers to care, as well as accurately identifying community needs.

Berkshire Health Systems in 2006 worked with the Community Health Center of Great Barrington and the Hilltown Health Center to continue the development of a network aimed at providing coordination, improved services and better access to care for residents in smaller communities in the region. The effort is called the Network for Rural Healthcare. The two centers and BMC also coordinated a program to target those needs through the use of a Healthy Communities Access program grant (details above).

V. PROVIDING FOR THE FUTURE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY

All available health status and needs assessment data is being used to guide our community benefit efforts in Fiscal 2007. Survey data was gathered from Lodestar II, a United Way and BMC project that surveyed hundreds of community households, focus groups and community leaders to identify and prioritize community issues and needs. Data from the Department of Public Health, Elder Services, the BHS strategic planning initiative, as well as ongoing community input will guide us in 2007.

In Fiscal 2007, Berkshire Medical Center will continue the development and implementation of a comprehensive brain injury program, focusing on the assessment and treatment of patients diagnosed with concussion and brain injury, including a community outreach effort. Neurologist Dr. Ellen Deibert, a specialist in brain injury diagnosis and treatment, is collaborating with the clinical ImPACT program, which evaluates patients with concussion injuries sustained in athletic events, and is working to bring ImPACT to local schools and sports teams. The brain injury support team will include physical, occupational and speech therapists, nurses, physiatrists, neurologists and neurosurgeons and will provide inpatient and prolonged outpatient care for brain injury patients.

BMC will actively continue participation in the state's cancer control efforts. BMC will continue the utilization of the Healthy Communities Access Program (HCAP) in a collaboration with the Community Health Program of Great Barrington to provide outreach services in the Berkshires, and will continue to expand its Worksite Wellness program. In addition, BMC will work collaboratively with the American Heart Association on enhancements and expansion of the Walk with Me in the Berkshires program.

Berkshire Medical Center will also continue to expand the outreach services provided by the Accent on Health program. As we expand our efforts, we intend to focus additional resources on providing key health-related information to our community and providing additional screening programs designed to identify risk factors and initiate preventive education for those at risk for cardiovascular disease and stroke. In addition, programs designed to further facilitate access to care for Berkshire residents will continue and be expanded, including the recruitment of new physicians, registered nurses and technologists. The Advocacy for Access program at BMC, the Neighborhood Health Center and the

admissions and fiscal departments of Berkshire Health Systems will continue their efforts to meet the needs of the under and uninsured in our community and initiatives, including expanded enrollment efforts for both MassHealth and the new Commonwealth Care program. Efforts will also continue to focus resources on the growing problem of obesity in children, with work continuing between Operation Better Start and the public school systems and that program's continued participation in a national effort designed to combat childhood obesity, called We Can. Programs will also continue to be aimed at diabetes education and treatment, cancer outreach, injury prevention and environmental health.

VI. COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

BMC is committed to meeting the needs of the underserved population. The revenue we collect from many of these programs falls far short of the costs of providing these much-needed services.

Neighborhood Health Center

Berkshire Medical Center's Neighborhood Health Center was relocated and enlarged in 1996 to increase the ability to educate and treat the uninsured and underinsured population. In Fiscal 2006 the Neighborhood Health Center treated over 2,600 patients. Office hours are 9 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., by appointment. The NHC provides outpatient primary care, educational, preventative, health promotion, counseling, and treatment services to patients who are 14 years old and older. Internal Medicine physicians, two nurse practitioners, registered nurses, medical residents and medical assistants provide care.

Project H.E.R.O.A. (Health, Education, Resources, Outreach, Advocacy)

This program is located at 510 North Street. It provides free breast and cervical cancer screening and diagnostic services to eligible uninsured and underinsured women. Its primary target is women aged 40-64. Women under age 40 and over 64 may be eligible but must meet program guidelines to qualify. Screening is available throughout Berkshire County through collaborative agreements with area Medical Centers and physicians. Primary funding comes from Massachusetts Department of Public Health. The program has been in operation since 1994. For the year 2006, the program served 443 women.

Dental Clinic

There were over 3,500 patient visits in fiscal year 2006 to the Dental Clinic at Berkshire Medical Center. The dental clinic is essential to our underinsured/underserved population and is accessible to all patients, as well as being well-suited for nursing home residents, special needs patients and vocational rehabilitation clients.

Berkshire Visiting Nurse Association (BVNA)

The BVNA provided services to the community including: senior health clinics; walk-in clinics in the community and businesses; health fairs; maternal child health education; regional immunizations; community education; healthy feet program. These programs are supported in part with a grant from the Berkshire United Way and the City of Pittsfield. In Fiscal 2006, the Berkshire VNA provided nearly 2,500 public health visits to area communities and over 3,500 immunizations. Additionally, the Berkshire VNA operates the Senior Sunday program. This offers free health-related presentations specifically for the older adult. This monthly lecture series is co-sponsored by BMC and the Berkshire Visiting Nurse Association and attracts over 100 adults per session. Topics include: stroke, cardiovascular disease, nutrition, diabetes, falls in the elderly population, and other health related issues.

State Clinics at BMC

Berkshire Medical Center provides the facilities and administrative support for the State Clinics, which are located at the Neighborhood Health Center. The State Clinics recorded close to 1,200 patient visits in 2006. Over 480 individuals were HIV tested through this program. There were nearly 200 visits to the Tuberculosis Clinic. There were close to 500 visits to the Sexually Transmitted Disease Clinic. The Clinic also participated in a number of educational programs throughout the community, including health fairs and other community presentations. The Clinic also has an off site-testing clinic at North Adams Regional Hospital on a twice-monthly basis to ensure easy access to our services for North Berkshire residents. The State Clinic staff also serves as a resource to other health care providers and provides them with educational materials upon request.

Dr. George R. Porter Lecture Series

This endowment fund was set up in 1988 to fund annual lecture/presentation in memory of Dr. George Porter, a very popular and beloved local Pediatrician.

WIC (Women, Infants and Children's Nutrition Education Program)

The WIC Program provides breastfeeding support, nutrition education, supplemental nutritious food, and immunization screening for over 2,000 Berkshire County residents. Berkshire Medical Center is the sponsoring agency for this essential nutrition program and provides administrative support, as well as the facilities for this important program. Over 850 client visits are made monthly between the three site locations in Pittsfield and North Adams.

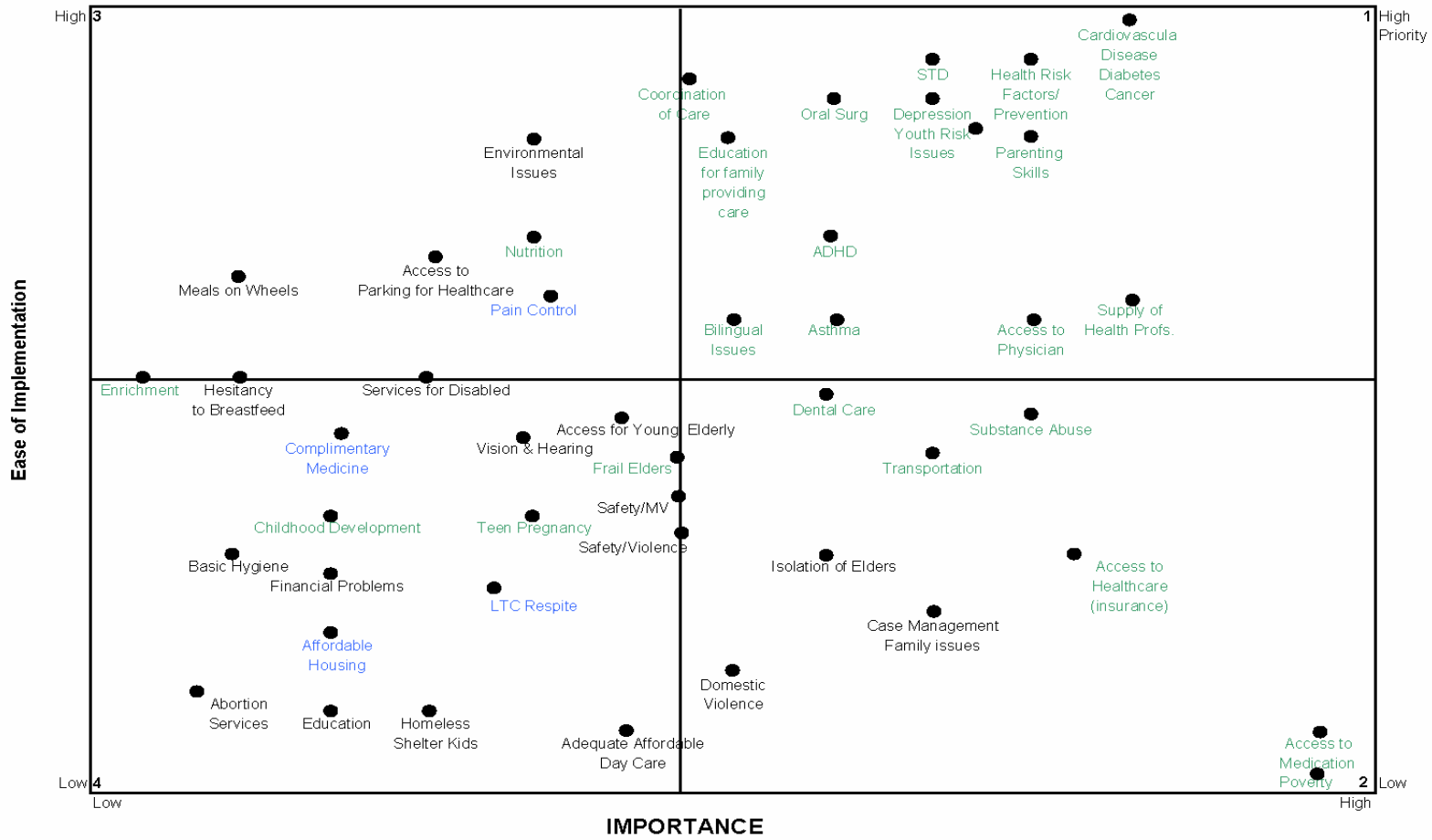
Trauma Services

In Fiscal 2006, the Berkshire medical Center Trauma Service provided care for 632 patients categorized by the Trauma Registry as needing emergent services for stabilization after injury. Trauma care is available 24 hours a day to all patients

presenting to the Emergency Department. The clientele served includes those from local communities, visitors and those traveling through the Berkshires. Of the 632 patients managed at Berkshire Medical Center in 2006, fourteen percent were referred by other hospitals in the Berkshire area for Trauma Service Management.

Initial stabilization is provided to all patients regardless of the severity of their injuries. The majority of the 2006 trauma patients (96.21%) received definitive care at Berkshire Medical Center. The remaining trauma patients (3.79%) were transferred for definitive care to Level I Trauma Centers and Specialty Centers (burn care, pediatric intensive care, etc...). Of these patient transfers, 100% required initial stabilization and management prior to transfer. The Trauma Service is involved with care of patients along the continuum from community injury prevention programs through rehabilitation. The Trauma Service is dedicated to providing optimal, comprehensive, quality care. The Trauma Service is actively involved in Community Prevention Programs as well as Pre-Hospital and Hospital Health Care Provider Education.

BHS COMMUNITY BENEFIT PRIORITIES



4/1/2002